

## Figurative Extension of Chinese Classifiers

JIAN-SHIUNG SHIE

*Department of the English Language, Da-Yeh University  
112 Shan-Jiau Rd., Da-Tsuen, Changhua, Taiwan*

### ABSTRACT

This article investigates metaphorical and metonymical extension of Chinese classifiers. A working definition of Chinese classifiers is determined in relation to Chinese measure words in the first place. Explored subsequently are (1) metaphorical extension of Chinese classifiers in terms of metaphorical theme, vehicle, and analogy and (2) metonymical extension of Chinese classifiers in terms of various schemas of metonymic association. It is found that figurative meanings or usages of Chinese classifiers arise from syntagmatic or paradigmatic extension and that a Chinese classifier concatenates with a succeeding noun to form a metaphor- and metonymy-rich phrasal construction, which is a distinctive feature in contrast with other types of Chinese measure words.

*Key Words:* Chinese, classifiers, metaphorical extension, metonymical extension, measure words

## 中文分類量詞之譬喻引申

謝健雄

大葉大學英美語文學系  
彰化縣大村鄉山腳路 112 號

### 摘要

本文旨在探討中文分類量詞之隱喻與轉喻引申。作者先從中文量詞中辨識分類量詞，並為中文分類量詞下定義，然後以喻體、喻依、類比之架構析論中文分類量詞之隱喻引申，並以各式轉喻關聯網要析論中文分類量詞之轉喻引申。結果發現中文分類量詞之譬喻引申可以是同一詞組內之水平性語言現象，亦可以是跨越不同詞組之垂直性現象，並發現分類量詞與名詞結合成一個譬喻相當豐富之語言結構，這是有別於其他中文量詞之一項顯著特色。

**關鍵詞：**中文，分類量詞，隱喻引申，轉喻引申，量詞



## I. INTRODUCTION

A classifier is a morpheme that categorizes entities or phenomena by picking out some salient perceptual properties (cf. Allan [2], Lyons [21], Tai and Wang [33]). A language has a classifier system if it has grammatical devices that oblige speakers to categorize a referent along specific semantic dimensions (cf. Goddard [9], Rijkhoff [27]). It is well known that Chinese has an extensive system of numeral classifiers. In Chinese, classifiers categorize nouns into semantic groups. Chinese classifiers usually have to occur between a head noun and a pronominal numeral or demonstrative, such as the following, in which 'CL' is short for 'classifier':

- (1) *dier ben shu* (第二本書; 'the second CL book')
- (2) *na ben zidian* (那本字典; 'that CL dictionary')
- (3) *liu ben xiangbu* (六本相簿; 'six CL photo albums')

This paper is intended to investigate figurative extension of Chinese classifiers. By the word *Chinese* I mean contemporary Mandarin Chinese used in Taiwan. In Section II we address the issue of identifying Chinese classifiers. Section III explores metaphorical extension of Chinese classifiers. Section IV concentrates on discussion of metonymic extension. And in Section V we have an overview of the range of the figurative extension in question.

This article is based on a corpus of more than four thousand Chinese classifier phrases I have collected from *Mandarin Chinese Daily News Dictionary of Measure Words* [11] and The Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus, whose public web access is at <http://www.sinica.edu.tw/ftms-bin/kiwi.sh>. A total of 190 Chinese classifiers have been identified (see Appendix) in accordance with the following criterion: A Chinese classifier is a measure word that categorizes one class of co-occurring nouns or more in reference to salient perceptual properties of the referents of the co-occurring nouns. This criterion will be discussed in the section that follows.

## II. CHINESE CLASSIFIERS AND MEASURE WORDS

In the literature on Chinese grammar, classifiers are often dealt with on a par with measure words. Li and Thompson [18] hold that a Chinese measure word can be a classifier. On the other hand, Li [19] distinguishes classifiers from measure words, contending that, whereas true measure words usually occur with non-count nouns, classifiers usually occur with count nouns whose referents are inherently and directly quantifiable. Tai and Wang [33] and Biq et al. [4] also differentiate classifiers from measure words. They hold that a classifier is restricted to co-occurrence with a class of words that share some salient perceptual properties, while a measure

word simply quantifies the entity named by a noun. In addition, Chao [7] treats Chinese classifiers and quantifying collectives as two different types of measures. These different views or treatments are probably caused by the vague sense of the term 'measure word.' It may be used to refer only to standard measure words like *kela* (克拉; 'carat'), *nian* (年; 'year'), *gongli* (公釐; 'millimeter'), and *jalun* (加侖; 'gallon'). In the widest sense of the term, 'measure word' may also include quantifying collectives, container measures, and such unit classifiers as *zhang1* (張, a classifier for something that has a flat surface) and *wei4* (位, a polite classifier for people).

As I see it, Chinese measure words, in the broadest sense of the term, refer to a class of words occurring with numerals or demonstratives to enumerate or individuate entities or states of affairs. In Mandarin Chinese a classifier is a measure word that categorizes one class of co-occurring nouns or more. Based on a balanced electronic corpus, *Mandarin Chinese Daily News Dictionary of Measure Words* [11] divides Chinese measure words into the following seven classes:

1. General measure words, such as *ben3* (本), *zhi1* (支), *qun2* (群), and *shu4* (束),
2. Event measure words, such as *chang3* (場), *zhuang1* (樁), *dun4* (頓), and *ji4* (記),
3. Categorical measure words, such as *zhong3* (種; 'kind'), *lei4* (類; 'category'), *yang4* (樣; 'type'), and *shi4* (式; 'style'),
4. Approximation measure words, such as *si1* (絲), *gu3* (股), *gan1* (干), and *shen1* (身),
5. Container measure words, such as *bao1* (包; 'pack'), *xiang1* (箱; 'box'), *tong3* (桶; 'bucket'), and *lan2* (籃; 'basket'),
6. Standard measure words, such as *bang4* (磅; 'pound'), *gong1chi3* (公尺; 'meter'), *da3* (打; 'dozen'), and *mei3yuan2* (美元; 'US dollar'), and
7. Activity measure words, such as *quan2* (拳; 'punch'), *quan1* (圈; 'lap'), *xia4* (下; 'time'), and *bian4* (遍; 'time').

Among the 427 measure words collected in the dictionary, 174 can be used as general measure words. General measure words include unit classifiers (e.g., *ben3* 本 and *zhi1* 支) and collective classifiers (e.g., *qun2* 群, and *shu4* 束). Unit classifiers are the paradigm type of Chinese classifiers. They are used for individuation or enumeration of structurally or functionally self-contained things perceived as equivalent or similar, as in examples (1)-(3), given in the first section of this paper.

Chinese unit classifiers categorize nominals into semantic groups. By the same token, quantifying collectives may also have the feature of semantic categorization—as in *ye wo xiao zhu* (一窩小豬; 'a litter of piglets'), *yi wo laoshu* (一窩老鼠; 'a litter of mice'), and *yi wo xiaogou* (一窩小狗; 'a



litter of puppies’)—hence the name collective classifiers. A unit classifier and its succeeding noun form a more tightly bound constituent in Chinese. The particle *de5* (的) cannot be inserted between a unit classifier and the succeeding noun. Thus we don’t have \**yi ben de shu* (\*一本的書; ‘a book’). This could indicate that Chinese unit classifiers have been grammaticalized from free noun morphemes and, accordingly, cannot occur as the first noun in the associative phrase construction ‘N + *de* + N.’ But most collective classifiers can take the particle *de5* (的), as in *yi wo de xiao gou* (一窩的小狗; ‘a litter of puppies’). Other than that, the borderline between Chinese unit classifiers and collective classifiers is not clear. *Mandarin Chinese Daily News Dictionary of Measure Words* [11] places unit classifiers and what we call collective classifiers in the same category, named ‘general measure words.’ In the dictionary ‘general measure words’ are described as the most typical and most common type of measure words in Chinese. Given that both unit classifiers and collective classifiers may show the sub-class to which their collocating nouns belong, it is not untenable to combine the two classes of Chinese measure words into one category.

In the dictionary there are 35 event measure words, which enumerate or individuate the occurrence of events. Since event measure words also indicate the semantic feature(s) through which their collocating nouns are categorized—as in *yi bo tiaozhan* (一波挑戰; ‘a wave of challenge’), *yi bo zhanhuo* (一波戰火; ‘a wave of war’), and *yi bo kangzheng* (一波抗爭; ‘a wave of demonstration’)—event measure words may as well be treated as classifiers. Although event classifiers and general classifiers are both a subset of Chinese measure words, about a dozen Chinese classifiers collocate with not only event-denoting but also entity-denoting nouns. In other words, these classifiers fit into two categories: event classifiers and general classifiers, as in *yi men qinshi* (一門親事; ‘a marriage’) and *yi men dapao* (一門大砲; ‘a piece of artillery’). In addition, it is possible for the same noun to collocate with an event classifier or general classifier, as in *yi qi mousha-an* (一起謀殺案; ‘a murder’) and *yi jian mousha-an* (一件謀殺案; ‘a murder case’).

Furthermore, there are 26 approximation measure words in the dictionary. Unable to be preceded by numerals other than *yi* (一; ‘one’), *zheyi* (這一; ‘this one’), and *nayi* (那一; ‘that one’), approximation measure words denote approximate quantity. They also categorize their succeeding nouns—as in *yi gu guaiwei* (一股怪味; ‘a whiff of strange smell’), *yi gu xingwei* (一股腥味; ‘a fishy smell’), and *yi gu xiangshuiwei* (一股香水味; ‘a whiff of perfume’)—and hence can also be conceptualized as classifiers.

On the other hand, container measure words, categorical measure words, and standard measure words are not classifiers in that they usually do not specifically categorize their succeeding nouns. As to activity measure words—as in *zou ta liang quan* (揍他兩拳; ‘give him two punches’)—they do not precede a noun and, accordingly, are not classifiers either.

In a nutshell, Chinese classifiers include general measure words, event measure words, and approximation measure words, all of which categorize one class of co-occurring nouns or more.

### III. METAPHORICAL EXTENSION

I take a topic-vehicle approach to describing and analyzing metaphor involving Chinese classifiers. As far as its underlying conceptual structure is concerned, metaphor is a way of conceiving or presenting one thing or one state of affairs in terms of another (cf. Black [5], Ortony [24], Richards [25], Shie [29], Shie [31]). In the remainder of this article, I shall refer to the former as ‘theme’ and the latter as ‘vehicle’ for convenience. Thus a theme is viewed or presented in terms of a vehicle in the metaphorical thought. There exists more or less metaphorical analogy between the theme and the vehicle, as in *yi mu wangshi* (一幕往事; ‘a visualized scene of something in the past’), in which *wangshi* (往事; ‘something in the past’) is the theme and *mu* (幕; ‘a dramatic scene’) is the vehicle. Analogy is similarity, as of properties or functions, between two unlike things that are otherwise not comparable. Metaphorical analogy highlights similarity (as between ‘a dramatic scene’ and the ‘visualized scene of something in the past’), ignores contrasts (as between a real scene and a visualized one), and suppresses the attributes of the vehicle that are not concordant with the textual and situational context (e.g., A dramatic scene is three-dimensional).

A metaphor may reside in a classifier phrase. The head noun may be metaphorically individuated or quantified in terms of the classifier. In other words, such metaphorical extension occurs syntagmatically, in which case the classifier serves as the vehicle and the succeeding noun is the metaphorical theme. The relationships that linguistic units have with other units are syntagmatic if they occur together in a sequence (cf. Richards et al. [26]). Metaphorical extension is shown to be syntagmatic in each of the following examples, in which the head noun is presented in terms of the classifier vehicle:

- (4) *yi dai qingxi* (一帶清溪; ‘a CL (ribbon) clear stream’)
- (5) *yi lun mingyue* (一輪明月; ‘a CL (wheel) brilliant moon’)
- (6) *yi zhu penquan* (一柱噴泉; ‘a CL (column) fountain’)
- (7) *yi yeh bianzhou* (一葉扁舟; ‘a CL (leave) flat boat’)
- (8) *yi guan riguangdeng* (一管日光燈; ‘a CL (tube)



fluorescence lamp')

(9) *yi dao caihong* (一道彩虹; 'a CL (road) rainbow')

It is well-known that shape is a common factor that determines the use of Chinese unit classifiers. For one thing, the classifier *gen1* (根) is used with nouns in reference to long or saliently one-dimensional objects, as in *yi gen xiangyan* (一根香煙; 'a CL cigarette'). When it comes to the classifier *mian4* (面), the succeeding noun is a flat or saliently two-dimensional object, as in *yi mian jingzi* (一面鏡子; 'a CL mirror'). By the same token, the formal features of shape and configuration form a basis of metaphorical extension of some unit classifiers, as exemplified in (4)-(9).

Many bound classifier morphemes have been grammaticalized from free noun lexemes (cf. Loke [20]). In fact, all the classifiers in (4)-(9) still have a homographic and homophonous morpheme in nouns, as in *dai3zi* (帶子; 'ribbon'), *lun3zi* (輪子; 'wheel'), *zhu3zi* (柱子; 'column'), and the like. A useful test for such syntagmatic extension of metaphor as in (4)-(9) is whether the classifier and the succeeding noun can be used in the following form of metaphorical statement: 'the succeeding noun + is/are + a noun containing the classifier morpheme.' Where it is possible to do this, the classifier and the succeeding noun in the noun phrase are in semantic apposition and there is syntagmatic extension from the classifier to the succeeding noun, as shown in the following:

1. Metaphorical classifier phrase: *yi yeh bianzhou* (一葉扁舟; 'a CL (leave) flat boat')
2. Metaphorical statement: *bianzhou shi yi pian yehzi* (扁舟是一片葉子; 'The flat boat is a leaf')

Another type of syntagmatic extension involves approximation classifiers—such as *dui1* (堆), *gu3* (股), *dian3* (點), and *xian4* (線)—which give a rough indication of the quantity of something their succeeding noun denotes. Approximation classifiers may be used to individuate something perceived or something abstract, serving as the vehicle of the metaphorical extension from concrete size to abstract quantity or degree, evident in the following phrases:

- (10) *yi ba nianji* (一把年紀; 'a CL (handful) age')
- (11) *yi dui fannaoh* (一堆煩惱; 'a CL (heap) worry')
- (12) *yi tuan luan* (一團亂; 'a CL (large lump) mess')
- (13) *yi mo qingxiang* (一抹清香; 'a CL (wisp) delicate fragrance')
- (14) *yi dian yali* (一點壓力; 'a CL (speck) stress')
- (15) *yi si xiwang* (一絲希望; 'a CL (silk) hope')

The entity or state of affairs each of the head nouns in (10)-(12) denotes is individualized in terms of a classifier connoting a large or considerable size. The phrase *yi dui shu* (一堆書; 'a heap of books') means a group of books placed one

on top of another. But under normal situation *yi dui fannaoh* (一堆煩惱; 'a heap of worry') cannot be interpreted in the same way. In this case, the meaning of the classifier *dui* (堆) has been extended from large group size to large quantity or degree on the ground that 'a heap of books' refers to a considerable group of material things and 'a heap of worry' to a considerable quantity or degree of mental feeling, which forms the basis of metaphorical analogy we have discussed previously—Metaphorical analogy is similarity between two unlike things that are otherwise not comparable. On the other hand, the classifiers in (13)-(15) are used to present a small amount or low degree through similar metaphorical extension. It is noticeable that the syntagmatic extension to quantity or degree may turn a general classifier into an approximation classifier, as can be seen from *liang dian shuidi* (兩點水滴; 'two CL water drops') and *yi dian qian* (一點錢; 'a little money'). The resulting approximation classifier does not have the enumerating function any longer, and accordingly, cannot follow numerals other than *yi* (一; 'one'), *zheyi* (這一; 'this one'), and *nayi* (那一; 'that one').

In many cases, metaphorical extension arises paradigmatically between two succeeding nouns of the same classifier. A figurative extension may be said to be paradigmatic if it arises between two juxtaposed linguistic units rather than between two units in a natural sequence. In a metaphorical pair of paradigmatically extended classifier phrases, one succeeding noun can be interpreted as the metaphorical theme and the other succeeding noun implicates the vehicle. The common classifier indicates the analogy between the theme and the vehicle, evident in the following phrases:

- (16) a. *yi duo hua* (一朵花; 'a CL flower')
- b. *yi duo weixiao* (一朵微笑; 'a CL smile')
- (17) a. *yi zhen qiangfeng* (一陣強風; 'a CL strong wind')
- b. *yi zhen jutong* (一陣劇痛; 'a CL severe pain')
- (18) a. *yi mei huojian* (一枚火箭; 'a CL rocket')
- b. *yi mei duzhen* (一枚毒針; 'a CL poisonous needle')
- (19) a. *yi fu tuhua* (一幅圖畫; 'a CL painting')
- b. *yi fu meijing* (一幅美景; 'a CL beautiful scenery')
- (20) a. *yi dao weiqiang* (一道圍牆; 'a CL wall')
- b. *yi dao pingzhang* (一道屏障; 'a CL protective screen')
- (21) a. *yi bo langhua* (一波浪花; 'a CL wave')
- b. *yi bo gongshi* (一波攻擊; 'a CL attack')

In (16) the two succeeding nouns *hua* (花; 'flower') and *weixiao* (微笑; 'smile') are metaphorically related in virtue of the similarity of property between them: they are beautiful or conducive to happiness. With reference to (17), the classifier *zhen4* (陣) indicates the metaphorical analogy between



*qiangfeng* (強風; 'strong wind') and *jutong* (劇痛; 'severe pain'), both of which happen suddenly and last for a certain length of time. Much the same can be said of (18)-(21).

Quite a few linguists (e.g. Aitchison [1], Burling [6], Lakoff [14], Lee [17], Rosch [28]) analyze linguistic and conceptual categorization in terms of prototypes. A category has prototypical members, and other members may be assimilated into the category by virtue of cognitive extension from prototypical members. Prototype theory can explain the relationships between succeeding nouns of many Chinese classifiers. For example, there is a prototypical class of nouns that go with the classifier *duan4* (段), including *lu* (路; 'road'), *xiepulo* (斜坡; 'slope'), *hai'anxian* (海岸線; 'coastline'), *shengzi* (繩子; 'rope'), and *zhugan* (竹竿; 'bamboo pole'). From these prototypical members other members are derived, such as *rizi* (日子; 'days'), *jingyan* (經驗; 'experience'), *hua* (話; 'remarks'), *chaju* (差距; 'disparity'), *lishi* (歷史; 'history'), and *lianqing* (戀情; 'love affair'). It is obvious that the non-typical members are related to the prototypical ones through a metaphorical extension from a spatial stretch of something to a temporal or abstract expanse.

According to my corpus, there are 39 Chinese collective classifiers, which are primarily used to enumerate or individuate groups of entities, such as *qun2* (群/羣), *pai2* (排), *quan1* (圈), *dui4* (對), and *die2* (疊). The meanings of Chinese collective classifiers are seldom extended paradigmatically. But the classifiers for a disparaged group of people are exceptions, including *bang1* (幫), *piao4* (票), *huo3* (夥/伙), *cuo1* (撮), and *wo1* (窩). The classifier *wo1* (窩) is prototypically for a litter or brood of animals. And yet it also applies to villains like *tufei* (土匪; 'bandits') and *qiangdao* (強盜; 'robbers'). And the prototypical nouns that *bang1* (幫), *piao4* (票), *huo3* (夥/伙), and *cuo3* (撮) take are all evildoers. These classifiers can all be used to refer to a group of people who do not cause harm or suffering to others but merely behave in a way the speaker does not approve of but could find it difficult to be really critical of, as in *yi bang xiaohuozhi* (一幫小伙子; 'a CL youngsters') and *yi piao pengyou* (一票朋友; 'a CL friends').

#### IV. METONYMICAL EXTENSION

In the literature (e.g. Beard [3], Hicks [10], Kennedy and Gioia [12], Lazar [16], Wales [35]) metonymy is usually described as the substitution of the name of one thing for the name of another closely related thing. The former may be called 'vehicle' and the latter 'metonymical referent.' The relationship between the two is based on association (cf. Coulson [8], Murfin and Ray [22], Stockwell and Minkova [32], Thornborrow and Wareing [34]). In order to clarify the

fuzzy concept of metonymical association, Shie [30, 31] has proposed 20 metonymic schemas, including 'part for whole or vice versa,' 'genus for species,' 'material for object,' 'property for entity,' 'place for people,' 'container for content,' 'symbolic association,' 'body part for faculty,' 'instrument for effect/result,' and 'trademark for product.' For example, the classifier phrases *yi zhi qiubang* (一支球棒; 'a CL bat') and *yi zhi anda* (一支安打; a CL hit) are related metonymically and the association is between an instrument (a bat) and the result of using the instrument to strike the ball (a hit).

According to my data, 18 Chinese unit classifiers are metonymically related to their succeeding nouns via the metonymic association of a part with the whole, among them *ba3* (把; 'handle'), *tou2* (頭; 'head'), *zhi1* (枝; 'twig'), *jie2* (節; 'joint'), *ding3* (頂; 'top'), and *jia4* (架; 'frame'). Such a classifier is the metonymic vehicle through which the succeeding noun is individuated or quantified, as in:

(22) *yi ba dao* (一把刀; 'a CL (handle) knife')

(23) *yi tou niu* (一頭牛; 'a CL (head) ox')

(24) *yi zhi taohua* (一枝桃花; 'a CL (twig) peach blossom')

(25) *yi jie ganzhe* (一節甘蔗; 'a CL (joint) sugarcane')

(26) *yi ding zhangpeng* (一頂帳篷; 'a CL (top) tent')

(27) *yi jia feiji* (一架飛機; 'a CL (frame) airplane')

Spatial association may also be identified in Chinese classifier phrases. Some classifiers mark the place where the referent of their succeeding noun is located. Two classifiers (*chu4* 處 and *suo3* 所) simply mean 'places' or 'locations.' Spatial association of a classifier with its succeeding noun is illustrated by the following examples, in which entities or phenomena are associated with their locations:

(28) *yi zhuo jiuxi* (一桌酒席; 'a CL (table) feast')

(29) *yi shen lenghan* (一身冷汗; 'a CL (body) cold sweat')

(30) *yi chu daoshang* (一處刀傷; 'a CL (place) knife wound')

(31) *yi suo xuexiao* (一所學校; 'a CL (location) school')

(32) *yi pan qi* (一盤棋; 'a CL (board) chess')

(33) *yi fang xifu* (一房媳婦; 'a CL (house) wife/daughter-in-law')

Some other classifiers are linked with their succeeding nouns through the metonymic schemas of 'material for object,' 'property for entity,' or 'body part for faculty,' as in the following:

(34) *yi zhi gongwen* (一紙公文; 'a CL (paper) official correspondence')

(35) *yi tie zhongyao* (一帖中藥; 'a CL (prescription paper) medicine')

(36) *yi zun foxiang* (一尊佛像; 'a CL (respect) image of Buddha')

(37) *yi quan lianyi* (一圈漣漪; 'a CL (circle) ripple')



- (38) *yi shou haocai* (一手好菜; 'a CL (hand) delicious dishes')  
 (39) *yi kou biao zhun yingyu* (一口標準英語; 'a CL (mouth) standard English')

Still other classifiers are formed from a verb. These deverbal classifiers indicate an action that is associated in one way or another with the denotation of their succeeding noun. What such a succeeding noun refers to can be construed as being moved by the action, being acted upon by the action, or playing the semantic role of the subject argument of the verb from which the classifier derived, evidenced in such phrases as:

- (40) *yi kun wengao* (一捆文稿; 'a CL (bundling up) manuscripts')  
 (41) *yi fa zidan* (一發子彈; 'a CL (shooting) bullet')  
 (42) *yi tong dianhua* (一通電話; 'a CL (putting through) phone call')  
 (43) *yi fu yao* (一服藥; 'a CL (taking) medicine')  
 (44) *yi qi chehuo* (一起車禍; 'a CL (occurring) car accident')  
 (45) *yi xing ren* (一行人; 'a CL (walking) people')

Turning next to the paradigmatic extension, succeeding nouns of quite a few Chinese classifiers are metonymically associated with each other. Consider the following examples:

- (46) *yi bi tudi* (一筆土地; 'a CL land')  
 (47) *yi bi zhang* (一筆帳; 'a CL account')  
 (48) *yi bi feiyung* (一筆費用; 'a CL charge')  
 (49) *yi bi ziliao* (一筆資料; 'a CL data')  
 (50) *yi bi shuzi* (一筆數字; 'a CL figure')  
 (51) *yi bi jilu* (一筆紀錄; 'a CL record')  
 (52) *yi bi maimai* (一筆買賣; 'a CL business deal')

Classifiers came into Chinese grammar well after the other grammatical categories had been established (Loke [20], Norman [23], Yau [36]). Thus it is obvious that *bi3* (筆; 'pen') was a common noun first and then evolved into a word that can be used as a common noun and a classifier. The common noun *bi3* (筆) refers to a pen. Denoting an instrument for registering the ownership of a piece of land, *bi3* (筆) can now be used as a classifier for *tudi* (土地; 'land'). People also use a pen to enter up an account; therefore, *bi3* (筆) can also serve as a classifier for *zhang* (帳; 'account'), *feiyung* (費用; 'charge'), *qian* (錢; 'money'), *lirun* (利潤; 'profit'), and so forth. The same is true of *ziliao* (資料; 'data'), *shuzi* (數字; 'figure'), *julu* (紀錄; 'record'), and *maimai* (買賣; 'business deal'). Thus the metonymic association is based on the schema of 'instrument for result.' And the extension is motivated metonymically.

The classifier *gu3* (股) may be used with the noun *qi4* (氣; 'air'). From the classifier phrase *yi gu qi* (一股氣; 'a CL air'), many other succeeding nouns of the classifier are derived metonymically. First of all, since smells are carried in the air,

they may also be individuated by the classifier *gu3* (股), as in *yi gu kafeixiang* (一股咖啡香; 'a sweet aroma of coffee') and *yi gu yuqiwei* (一股油漆味; 'a smell of fresh paint'). Second, the morpheme *qi* (氣; 'air') combines with the morpheme *li* (力; 'strength') to form the noun *qili* (氣力; 'strength') or *liqi* (力氣; 'strength'). Air is essential to strength. When one stops breathing, he/she will lose his/her strength. Therefore, *qi* (氣; 'air') stands for strength in Chinese, which accounts for the fact that the classifier *gu3* (股) may individuate not only *qi* (氣; 'air') but also *liliang* (力量; 'force'), *dongli* (動力; 'motive force'), *yili* (毅力; 'willpower'), *shili* (勢力; 'force/power'), *xiangxingli* (向心力; 'unity strength'), *qishi* (氣勢; 'momentum'), and the like. Third, *qi* (氣; 'air') symbolizes feeling, as can be seen in the following expressions: *shengqi* (生氣; 'be angry'), *piqi* (脾氣; 'temper'), *duqi* (賭氣; 'be in a mood'), *xieqi* (泄氣; 'feel discouraged'), and *qinei* (氣餒; 'lose heart'). Consequently, the classifier *gu3* (股) can individuate nouns like *nuqi* (怒氣; 'anger'), *yingqi* (勇氣; 'courage'), *jiaoqi* (驕氣; 'arrogance'), *xiqi* (喜氣; 'joy'), *yuanyi* (怨氣; 'grievance'), *xingfen* (興奮; 'excitement'), *jiqing* (激情; 'passion'), *jian-ao* (煎熬; 'suffering'), and beyond. Finally, the Chinese concept of *qi* (氣; 'air') entails temperament and atmosphere. As such, the succeeding nouns of the classifier *gu3* (股) include *qizhi* (氣質; 'temperament'), *xieqi* (邪氣; 'evil temperament'), *zhaqi* (朝氣; 'youthful spirit'), *qifen* (氣氛; 'atmosphere'), *tianzhen* (天真; 'naiveness'), *qinqiegan* (親切感; 'cordialness'), and *langman* (浪漫; 'romance'). In a word, succeeding nouns of the classifier *gu3* (股) are related through symbolic association. Other examples of symbolic association are as follows:

- (53) a. *yi ke xin* (一顆心; 'a CL heart')  
 b. *yi ke linghun* (一顆靈魂; 'a CL soul')  
 (54) a. *yi xian yangguang* (一線陽光; 'a CL sunlight')  
 b. *yi xian xiwang* (一線希望; 'a CL hope')

In (53) the classifier for *xin* (心; 'heart') is used with the noun *linghun* (靈魂; 'soul') given that the heart stands for the soul. The two phrases in (54) demonstrate that light is a symbol of hope. In fact, such a phrase as (54b) presents a complex figure in which metaphor and metonymy operate simultaneously (cf. Shie [30]). We have just seen that (54b) involves a metonymic association of light with hope. At the same time, there is a metaphorical analogy between the vehicle *xian* (線; 'thread') and the theme *xiwang* (希望; 'hope'). As a thread is very thin, so is the amount of the hope very small.

A special metonymic usage of classifiers is based on the genius-for-species association. The classifier for a genus noun can be used to individuate or enumerate one of its species. For example, the noun *zuopin* (作品; 'works') can be used with



the following classifiers: *jian4* (件), *pian1* (片), *shou3* (首), *zhang1* (張), *bu4* (部), and *dong4* (棟). Different classifiers can define the referent or narrow down the scope of possible referents of the succeeding noun. The phrase *yi dong zuopin* (一棟作品; 'a CL work) refers to a building, while *yi bu zuopin* (一部作品; 'a CL work') means a movie, a book, or a set of books, depending on the context.

The trademark-for-product association can also be found in Chinese classifier phrases, as in:

(55) *yi gen xinleyuan* (一根新樂園; 'a CL New Paradise')

(56) *yi liang binshi* (一輛賓士; 'a CL Mercedes')

(57) *yi jia boyin* (一架波音; 'a CL Boeing')

In (55), *xinleyuan* (新樂園; 'new paradise') is a cigarette trade name popular in Taiwan some 30 years ago. As a matter of fact, metonymic extension is a very complicated linguistic phenomenon. Many schemas of metonymy have been presented in the literature (as in Kovecses [13], Lakoff and Johnson [15], Shie [30]). And yet they cannot cover all the instances of metonymic extension of Chinese classifiers. For example, we can speak of *yi zhi dianhua* (一支電話; 'a telephone') and *yi zhi haoma* (一支號碼; 'a telephone number'). The two succeeding nouns are obviously related metonymically. But I have found that none of the existing metonymic schemas can cover such a metonymic usage of classifier. However, the metonymic schemas discussed in this section are capable of accounting for the overwhelming majority of metonymic extensions of Chinese classifiers.

## V. THE RANGE OF FIGURATIVE EXTENSION

Conventional figurative extension is quite active in Chinese classifier phrases. According to my own careful calculation, of the 190 classifiers listed in Appendix, as many as 125 (65.8%) have one or more established figurative meanings or usages. The minority of classifiers out of the range of conventional figurative extension include the following three notable types:

1. highly grammaticalized classifiers like *ben3* (本), *pi1* (匹), *ge5* (個), and *wei4* (位), which have little lexical semantics,
2. archaic classifiers like *sheng4* (乘), *zhu4* (炷), *ding4* (錠), and *que4* (闕), and
3. collective classifiers, especially those expressing the arrangement of a group of related entities, such as *pai2* (排), *die2* (疊), *lie4* (列), and *zha2* (紮).

The numbers of metaphorically and metonymically extended classifiers are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Numbers of metaphorically and metonymically extended classifiers in Chinese**

	metaphoric	metonymic	total
syntagmatic	25	62	87
paradigmatic	47	31	78
total	72	93	165

As Table 1 shows, there are more Chinese classifiers with metonymically extended meanings or usages than with metaphorically extended ones. And the metaphorical meanings or usages of classifiers tend to be derived paradigmatically, while the metonymical ones tend to arise through syntagmatic extension.

## VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this article we have investigated figurative extension of Chinese classifiers in the context of classifier phrases. We have treated Chinese classifiers as measure words that categorize one class of co-occurring nouns or more in terms of salient perceptual properties of the denotations of the co-occurring nouns. We have found that figurative meanings or usages of Chinese classifiers are the products of syntagmatic or paradigmatic extension. It is obvious that Chinese classifiers combine with their succeeding nouns to form a phrasal construction that abounds with instances of figurative extension. This is a conspicuous feature of Chinese classifiers in contrast with other Chinese measure words. Extremely rare are instances of figurative extension of categorical measure words, container measure words, and standard measure words. Hopefully, this article has shed a little new light on our understanding of Chinese classifiers and can be helpful to teaching and learning classifiers in Chinese as a foreign language.

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## APPENDIX: CHINESE CLASSIFIERS

1. ba3 (把; for objects that has a handle or a handful of something)
2. bo1/po1 (波; for waves, unexpected turn of events, successive actions, etc.)
3. ban1 (班; for runs of buses, trains, flights, etc.)
4. ban4 (瓣; for petals, segments of a tangerine, garlic, etc.)
5. ben3 (本; for books, notebooks, magazines, photo albums, etc.)
6. bang1 (幫; for a disparted group of people)
7. bi3 (筆; for money, land, information, business deals, etc.)
8. bing3 (柄; for tools with a handle)
9. bu4 (步; for moves or steps)
10. bu4 (部; for machines, vehicles, movies, plays, dictionaries, works, etc.)
11. pai2 (排; for a row of people, objects, etc.)
12. pai4 (派; for schools of thought, different political forces, competing theories, sects, etc.)
13. pao1 (泡; for urine discharged at a time)
14. pan2 (盤; for games of chess, sets of tennis game, etc.)
15. pi1 (匹; for horses, mules, etc.)
16. pi1 (批; for a batch of goods, people, data, etc.)
17. pi3 (匹; for a bolt of cloth)
18. pi3 (疋; for a bolt of cloth)
19. pie3 (撇; for eyebrows, a row of moustache, or left-falling strokes)
20. piao4 (票; for a business deal or a group of disparted people)
21. pian1 (篇; for articles, papers, news stories, reports, etc.)
22. pian4 (片; for thin and flat pieces, land, etc.)
23. mo3 (抹; for a faint smell, feeling, etc.)
24. mei2 (枚; for round or cylindrical objects.)
25. men2 (門; for branches of study, marriages, cannons, etc.)
26. mian4 (面; for things with a flat surface)
27. ming2 (名; for people of different professions)
28. mu4 (幕; for a dramatic scene or sight)
29. fa1 (發; for cartridges)
30. fan1 (番; for a stretch of discourse, a specific sight, etc.)
31. fen4 (分; for documents, gifts, something abstract viewed as a whole, etc.)
32. fen4 (份; for servings of food, shares of something, documents, gifts, jobs, newspapers, magazines, etc.)
33. fang1 (方; for contesting sides or parties, square things, etc.)
34. fang2 (房; for a daughter-in-law, wife, etc.)
35. feng1 (封; for letters or telegrams)
36. fu2 (服; for doses of Chinese medicine)
37. fu2 (幅; for paintings, photos, maps, calligraphic works, etc.)
38. fu4 (付; for a set or pair of things, a specific facial expression, etc.)
39. fu4 (副; for a set or pair of things, a specific facial expression, etc.)
40. dai4 (代; for a generation of people, etc.)
41. dai4 (帶; for a ribbon-like scene, view, etc.)
42. dao4 (道; for dishes, doors, walls, procedures, orders, long and narrow things, rays of light, etc.)
43. dang3 (檔; for stocks, drama, exhibitions, etc.)
44. dang4zi5 (檔子; for a matter or an affair)
45. di1 (滴; for drops of liquid)
46. die2 (疊; for a wad of things)
47. dian3 (點; for items, dots, moles, freckles, etc.)
48. ding3 (頂; for objects that has a top)
49. ding4 (錠; for silver used as currency or Chinese ink sticks)
50. du3 (堵; for walls)
51. duo3 (朵; for flowers, mushrooms, clouds, etc.)
52. dui1 (堆; for a heap of things or substance)
53. dui4 (隊; for a team of people)
54. dui4 (對; for a pair of persons, animals, or objects)
55. duan4 (段; for sections of something long and thin, stretches of language, lengths of a continuum, etc.)
56. dun4 (頓; for meals, thrashings, etc.)
57. dong4 (棟; for buildings)
58. tai1 (胎; for a litter of animals)
59. tai2 (台/臺; for machines, vehicles, or traditional opera)
60. tao4 (套; for suits of clothes, standards, systems, strategies, plans, methods, thoughts, etc.)
61. tou2 (頭; for big 4-legged animals)
62. tan1 (攤/灘; for a pool or puddle of liquid)
63. tang2 (堂; for periods or classes)
64. tang4 (趟; for trips)
65. ti2 (題; for exam questions)
66. tie1/tie4 (帖; for prescriptions of Chinese medicine or doses of Chinese herbal medicine)
67. tiao3 (條; for long and thin things, often flexible, etc.)
68. ting3 (挺; for machine guns)
69. tuo2 (坨; for a roundish or cone-like lump of substance)
70. tuan2 (團; for balls or lumps of something)
71. tong1 (通; for phone calls or telegrams)
72. lan2 (欄; for columns of words, figures, etc.)
73. li4 (粒; for small things like grains, seeds, pills, etc.)
74. lie4 (列; for trains or train cars)
75. liu3 (辮; for a small bunch of hair)
76. lian2 (聯; for a set of stamps, tickets, etc.)



77. liang4 (輛; for vehicles)
78. lu4 (路; for a route or a group of people)
79. luo4 (落; for a pile of objects)
80. lun2 (輪; for talks, rounds of a game, match, etc.)
81. lu3 (旅; for a brigade)
82. lu3 (縷; for a wisp of smoke, smell, hair, etc.)
83. ge5 (個/箇; general classifier)
84. gan1 (干; for a group of criminals or ill-behaved people)
85. gen1 (根; for hair, stick-shaped objects, etc.)
86. gu3 (股; for thread, power, trends, currents, floods, etc.)
87. gua4 (掛; for a string of things that can be hung up)
88. guan3 (管; for hollow, tube-shaped objects)
89. ke1 (棵; for plants)
90. ke1 (顆; for small and roundish things)
91. ke4 (客; for servings of food)
92. ke4 (課; for something learned or to be learned in a lesson)
93. kou3 (口; for knives, persons in a family, things with a mouth or opening, etc.)
94. kuai4 (塊; for pieces of something solid, thin and flat things, patches of something on a plane or surface, etc.)
95. kun3 (捆/網; for a bundle of things)
96. hang2 (行; for a line or row of people, objects, etc.)
97. hu4 (戶; for houses or households)
98. huo3 (夥/伙; for a disparaged group of people)
99. hui2 (回; for occasions of a recurring action or event)
100. ji2 (級; for a step in a flight of stairs)
101. ji2 (集; for an episode of a book, play, etc.)
102. ji2 (輯; for an episode of a book)
103. ji4 (記; for slaps in the face, punches, strikes, etc.)
104. ji4 (劑; for injections or doses of Chinese medicine)
105. jia1 (家; for households, residences, or institutions)
106. jia4 (架; for an aircraft or a machine)
107. jie1 (階; for a step in a flight of stairs)
108. jie2 (節; for train cars, lengths or sections of something long, quarters of a game, etc.)
109. jie2 (截; for sections of long things)
110. jie4 (屆; for yearly meetings or activities, graduation classes, etc.)
111. jian1 (間; for rooms, buildings, or institutions)
112. jian4 (件; for clothes, works, events, etc.)
113. jing1 (莖; for a hair)
114. ju2 (局; for an inning or set of a game)
115. ju4 (句; for sentences)
116. ju4 (具; for apparatus, corpses, or coffins)
117. juan3 (卷/捲; for rolls or reels of something)
118. juan4 (卷; for books)
119. qi2 (畦; for rectangular pieces of farmland)
120. qi2 (期; for issues of a magazine, phases of a project, etc.)
121. qi3 (起; for accidents, cases, etc.)
122. qiang1 (腔; for emotions, ideals, etc.)
123. qu3 (曲; for a song or music)
124. quan1 (圓; for something circular, circular motions, laps, etc.)
125. que4 (闕; for a type of Chinese poetry written to tunes)
126. qun2 (群/羣; for a group of people, animals, etc.)
127. xi2 (席; for talks, members of an assembly or committee, etc.)
128. xian4 (線; for lanes, telephone lines, or something long and thin)
129. xiang4 (項; for opinions, demands, agreements, proposals, decisions, orders, measures, plans, premises, principles, costs, tasks, inventions, nominations, features, recognitions, operations, factors, etc.)
130. xing2 (行; for a group of traveling people)
131. zhi1 (支; for teams, songs, dance, long and thin objects, etc.)
132. zhi1/zhi3 (只; for containers, utensils, etc.)
133. zhi1 (枝; for sprays of flowers or leaves, long and thin objects, etc.)
134. zhi1 (隻; for animals, vessels, containers, utensils, etc.)
135. zhi3 (紙; for documents)
136. zha2 (紮; for a pack or wad of things)
137. zhao1 (招; for a move of martial arts, method, strategy, etc.)
138. zhou2 (軸; for scrolls of Chinese painting)
139. zhan3 (盞; for lamps)
140. zhen1 (針; for injections)
141. zhen4 (陣; for sudden phenomena)
142. zhang1 (張; for things that has a flat surface or can be opened or spread)
143. zheng4 (幀; for paintings, photos or certificates of merit)
144. zhu1 (株; for plants)
145. zhu4 (柱; for a column-like object or phenomenon)
146. zhu4 (炷; for burning joss sticks)
147. zhuo1 (桌; for the food and drink on a table, the guests around a table, 4 people playing mahjong, etc.)
148. zhuo2 (著; for moves at chess)
149. zhuang1 (樁; for events, cases, business deals, etc.)
150. chang3 (場; for sporting events, entertainment activities, calamities, dreams, war, games, etc.)
151. chu1 (齣; for drama, movies, etc.)
152. chu4 (處; for locations, venues, errors, wounds, households, parking lots, shopping centers, baseball fields, historic sites, woods, etc.)
153. chuang2 (床; for quilts, blankets, etc.)
154. chuan4 (串; for a string or cluster of things)



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155. chuang2 (幢; for buildings)
156. chong2 (重; for meanings, layers of substance, etc.)
157. shou3 (手; for skills manifested mainly through hands)
158. shou3 (首; for music, songs, or poetry)
159. shan4 (扇; for doors, windows, or screens)
160. shen1 (身; for a suit of clothes being worn, skills in martial arts, etc.)
161. sheng1 (聲; for voices or sounds)
162. sheng4 (乘; for war chariots)
163. shu4 (束; for a bunch or sheaf of things)
164. shuang1 (雙; for pairs of socks, shoes, chopsticks, etc.)
165. ren4 (任; for terms of office)
166. ze2 (則; for self-contained pieces of writing)
167. zu3 (組; for a group of people or a set of photos, figures, works, etc.)
168. zuo3/cuo1 (撮; for a bunch of hair, noodles, bad guys, etc.)
169. zuo4 (座; for trophies, prizes, statues, stages, buildings, bridges, swimming pools, reservoirs, cities, mountains, islands, woods, etc.)
170. zun1 (尊; for statues or cannons)
171. zong1 (宗; for cases, documents, etc.)
172. ci4 (次; for occasions of a recurring action or event)
173. ce4 (冊; for books, magazines, etc.)
174. can1 (餐; for meals)
175. ceng2 (層; for stories of building, coats/sheets of something, etc.)
176. cu4 (簇; for a bunch or clump of plants)
177. cong2 (叢; for a clump of plants)
178. si1 (絲; for a thread-like thing, a subtle feeling, etc.)
179. sao1 (艘; for bigger vessels)
180. suo3 (所; for institutions)
181. ye4 (頁; for a page of text, information, etc.)
182. ye4 (葉; for a small boat)
183. wo1 (窩; for a litter or brood of animals or a disparaged group of people)
184. wei3 (尾; for fish or shrimps)
185. wei4 (位; a polite classifier for people)
186. wei4 (味; for medical herbs, small dishes, or ingredients)
187. wan1 (彎; for a crescent moon, a stream of water, etc.)
188. wan1 (灣; for a stream of water)
189. wan2 (丸; for boluses of medicine)
190. yuan2 (員; for high-ranking military officers, baseball hitters, etc.)

